

wherein:

G is a linear or branched polymer residue;

Y₁ and Y₂ are independently O, S, or NR₉;

M₁-M₃ are independently O, S, or NR₁₀;

M₄ is X or Q;

wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from C(=Y₂);

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

R₁₋₁₀ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyls, C₃₋₁₂ branched alkyls, C₃₋₈ cycloalkyls, C₁₋₆ substituted alkyls, C₃₋₈ substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C₁₋₆ heteroalkyls and substituted C₁₋₆ heteroalkyls;

a, b, c, d, h, i and n are each independently zero or a positive integer, and

e, f and g are each independently a positive integer.

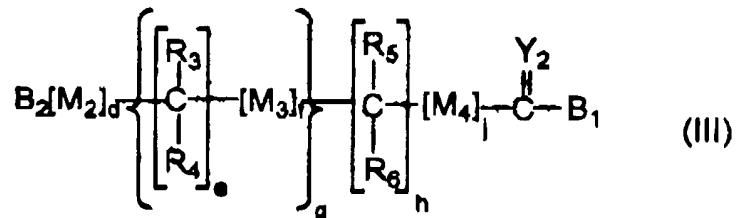
Please amend claim 4 as follows:

4. (Amended) The compound of claim 1, wherein a, b, c, d, h, i and n are independently zero, one or two.

Please amend claim 25 as follows:

25. A method of preparing a polymeric conjugate, comprising:

a) reacting a biologically active moiety having an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group with a compound of the formula



wherein

B₁ is a leaving group capable of reacting with an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group;

B_2 is a cleavable protecting group;

Y_2 is O, S, or NR_9 ;

M_2 - M_3 are independently O, S, or NR_{10} ;

M_4 is X or Q;

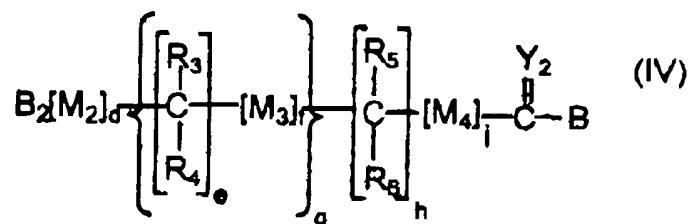
wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C(=Y_2)$;

R_{3-6} , R_9 and R_{10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-6} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-6} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

d , h , and i are each independently zero or a positive integer; and

e , f and g are each independently a positive integer

to form a protected intermediate of the formula:

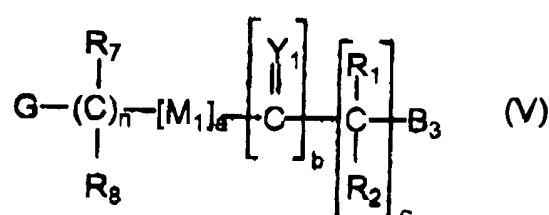


wherein

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

b) deprotecting the resultant intermediate by removing B_2 ; and

c) reacting the deprotected intermediate with a compound of the formula



wherein

B_3 is a leaving group;

G is a polymer residue;

Y_1 is O, S, or NR_9 ;

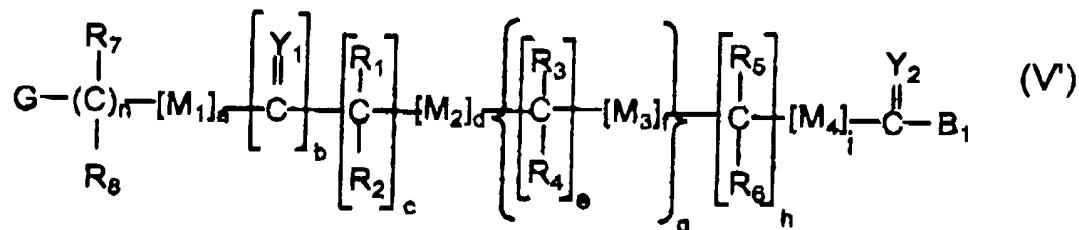
M_1 is O, S, or NR_{10} ;

R_1, R_2, R_7, R_9 and R_{10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls; and

a, b and c are each independently zero or a positive integer, whereby a polymeric conjugate is formed.

Please amend claim 26 as follows:

26. A method of preparing a polymeric conjugate, comprising: reacting a polymer-spacer intermediate of the formula



wherein

B_1 is a leaving group capable of reacting with an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group; G is a polymer residue;

Y_1 and Y_2 are independently O, S, or NR_9 ;

M_1-M_4 are independently O, S, or NR_{10} ;

M_4 is X or Q;

wherein X is an electron withdrawing group and Q is a moiety containing a free electron pair positioned three to six atoms from $C=Y_2$;

B is a residue of an amine-containing moiety or a residue of a hydroxyl-containing moiety;

R_{1-10} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls and substituted C_{1-6} heteroalkyls;

a, b, c, d, h, l and n are each independently zero or a positive integer; and e, f and g are each independently a positive integer;
and thereafter reacting intermediate with a biologically active moiety having an unprotected amine or hydroxyl group to form the polymeric conjugate.

Please Add the Following New Claim:

32. (New) The compound of claim 1, wherein *e, f and g are each independently one or two.*

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Applicants and the undersigned wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview conducted April 23, 2003.

Since the present amendment raises no new issues for consideration and, in any event, places the present application in better condition for consideration on appeal, it is respectfully requested that this amendment be entered under 37 CFR 1.116 in response to the last Office Action dated February 3, 2003, which made final rejections as to the pending claims.

Please replace pending claims 1, 4, 25 and 26 with the revised form of the claims and add new claim 32. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the amendment. The attached appendix is captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made".

A. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

As a result of the present amendment, claims 1-32 are presented in the case for continued prosecution. It is noted that new claim 32 was necessitated in view of the amendment required for claim 4 after the amendment to claim 1. No new matter has been added.